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United Nations

Report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation

General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-ninth session
Supplement No. 46 (A/59/46)

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Note

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1. The United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation held its fifty-second session in Vienna from 26 to 30 April 2004. Yasuhito Sasaki (Japan), Robi M. Chatterjee (Canada) and Peter A. Burns (Australia) served as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur, respectively. The meeting continued the development of new documents on the sources and effects of ionizing radiation last reviewed at the fifty-first session of the Scientific Committee, in 2003.

2. The Scientific Committee took note of General Assembly resolution 58/88 of 19 December 2003, in which the Assembly, reaffirming the desirability of the Scientific Committee continuing its work, urged the United Nations Environment Programme to review and strengthen the present funding of the Scientific Committee and emphasized the need for the Scientific Committee to hold regular sessions on an annual basis.

3. The provision of an operating budget adequate to allow the Scientific Committee to fulfil its mandate from the General Assembly, expressed most recently in resolutions 57/115 of 11 December 2002 and 58/88, remains a concern. The report of the Scientific Committee for 2003[1] anticipated that adequate funds for the Scientific Committee to hold annual meetings would be restored for the biennium 2004-2005 in accordance with resolution 57/115; however, only partial restitution has occurred. While increased funds were provided for the essential task of recruiting consultants, those funds accounted to only two thirds of the total requested. The Scientific Committee will be able to continue the present, approved programme of work by holding the fifty-third session in 2005, but only at a lower level of effectiveness. As the General Assembly urged in resolution 58/88, in paragraph 11, strengthening of the present funding of the Scientific Committee, to the level originally requested for 2004-2005, is necessary so that the responsibilities and mandate entrusted to it can be discharged. Sufficiently improved funding has yet to be delivered.

4. At its fifty-second session, the Scientific Committee held detailed technical discussions that resulted in clear instructions to the Secretariat as to the content and form of future scientific annexes and considered new information relevant to assessing sources of radiation, the exposures that those sources give rise to and the effects that result. Its deliberations focused on a review of documents prepared by the Secretariat on subjects that the Scientific Committee had identified as the most important topics for further study, including exposures of workers and the public to various sources of radiation; sources-to-effects assessment for radon in homes and workplaces; radioecology, methodologies for dose assessment and effects of radiation on non-human biota; non-targeted and delayed effects of exposure to ionizing radiation; health effects due to radiation from the Chernobyl accident (for which official collaboration established by the Committee with scientists in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine have advanced to a stage where comparisons of data according to a common methodology are encouraged and supported); evaluation of new epidemiological studies of radiation and cancer; epidemiological evaluation and dose response of diseases other than cancer that might be related to radiation exposure; medical radiation exposures; effects of radiation on the immune system; and summary documents on the health effects of radiation and the sources

of ionizing radiation exposure, intended for inclusion in the report made by the Scientific Committee to the General Assembly in the year that detailed scientific annexes are deemed ready for publication.

5. To allow the findings of the Scientific Committee to reach a broader audience, Internet-based access has been provided to published documents of the Scientific Committee for the period 2003-2004. Current web statistics indicate that, each year, some 50,000 visits are made to the web site, about 200,000 pages are viewed and nearly one million hits are made for the entire site. In April 2004, the month preceding the fifty-second session, those visits resulted in over 20,000 copies of the scientific annexes from the 2000 and 2001 reports of the Scientific Committee being downloaded and made available to professionals and the general public.

6. The fifty-second session of the Scientific Committee was attended by observers of the World Health Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Commission on Radiation Units and Measurements, the International Commission on Radiological Protection, the International Union of Radioecology and the Nuclear Energy Agency. The Scientific Committee wishes to acknowledge their contributions to the discussions. The Scientific Committee decided to hold its fifty-third session in Vienna from 30 May to 3 June 2005.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 46* (A/58/46), para. 7.